PSYCHO-THEOLOGICAL LEARNING MODEL TO IMPROVE MENTAL RESILIENCE IN MUSLIM ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract	This study was conducted at STIT Muaraenim, South Sumatra, Indonesia, specifically within the Islamic education setting of Madrasah Aliyah, where psychotheological learning practices were implemented. The research utilized a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of Muslim adolescents undergoing such learning. Data were sourced from purposively selected teachers and students actively engaged in faith-based character education programs. To ensure data richness, the study employed triangulated collection methods including in-depth semi-structured interviews, participatory classroom observations, and document analysis comprising lesson plans, student portfolios, and reflective teacher notes. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data, enabling a deep understanding of the psychological and theological interactions occurring in the learning process. Findings reveal that integrating Islamic theological concepts with psychological reflections enhances students' mental resilience, promotes religious optimism, and nurtures a stable self-concept. Teachers functioned as both spiritual facilitators and emotional companions, while a spiritually nourishing learning environment proved pivotal. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Islamic educational innovation by proposing psychotheological learning as a transformative pedagogical model to foster psychological strength and spiritual depth among Muslim adolescents.
Keywords	Islamic Education, Mental Resilience, Psychotheological Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Today's Muslim youth face complex challenges that are not only social but also psychological and spiritual. The rapid influence of digitalisation, shifting family values, and exposure to global culture have affected how they perceive life and cope with stress. Research indicates that levels of anxiety, depression, and identity confusion among Muslim youth tend to increase, alongside the weak internalisation of strong religious values (Ramadhan et al., 2025). Therefore, an educational approach that can bridge psychological and theological aspects in an integrated manner is needed. Islamic Religious Education in schools and madrasahs has sought to internalise the values of faith and morality. However, the dominant cognitive-conceptual approach has not fully addressed students' affective and religious experiential aspects. An innovative learning model integrating religious psychology and theology is believed to be more effective in building a deep sense of spiritual meaning (Yıldız, 2025). Such a model can help students positively perceive life's trials as part of divine destiny.

The current mental resilience of Muslim adolescents at Madrasah Aliyah STIT Muaraenim shows symptoms that require serious attention. Based on initial observations and field data, it was found that most students experience difficulties in managing academic pressure, social conflicts, and anxiety about the future. Some students admitted to feeling easily discouraged, lacking a clear direction in life, and lacking confidence in facing challenges. The weak internalisation of religious values exacerbates this personally, which should serve as a source of inner strength (Pastwa-Wojciechowska et al., 2021). From a psychological perspective, factors such as low emotional control, limited coping skills, and insufficient social support are the primary contributors to weak mental resilience. From a theological perspective, a limited understanding of the meaning of life's trials from the perspective of qadha and qadar and weak spiritual awareness of tauhid exacerbate this condition. These initial findings indicate that a purely cognitive approach to learning is insufficient to address students' psychospiritual needs holistically.

Religious psychology emphasises that strong spiritual beliefs contribute significantly to an individual's mental resilience. Religiosity is a coping mechanism in dealing with emotional stress and inner conflict (Zaen et al., 2025). For Muslim adolescents, the internalisation of the values of tawhid and the concept of destiny is not merely dogma but a source of meaning in life that can reduce anxiety. As a discipline of Islamic theology, Kalam provides an epistemological foundation for beliefs about the attributes of Allah, qadha and qadar, and divine wisdom behind all events.

Mature theological understanding has been proven to correlate with religious optimism and readiness to face problems (Alief et al., 2025). Therefore, integrating Islamic theology into the learning process is relevant for building mental resilience.

The psychotheological learning model is an integrative approach that simultaneously combines psychological affective dimensions with theological aspects. This approach teaches doctrinal material cognitively and cultivates emotional meaning and resilient spiritual attitudes (Karori, 2024). This model is considered capable of addressing the problem of weak religious connection with students' psychological experiences. Mental resilience is an individual's ability to recover from adversity, maintain psychological well-being, and remain productive under pressure. Religiousness and spiritual meaning have been proven to positively predict mental resilience in adolescents (Nasution & Firdaus, 2019). Learning integration that emphasises theological reflection can strengthen the positive coping capacity of Muslim adolescents.

Therefore, a conceptual, practical, and contextual psycho-theological learning model design is needed in Muslim adolescents' lives in madrasahs. This model must integrate principles of religious psychology with core values in Islamic theology, such as tawakal (trust in God), patience, gratitude, and acceptance of fate. In the context of Madrasah Aliyah STIT Muaraenim, learning that involves theological reflection, spiritual strengthening, and emotional guidance simultaneously will be a more effective approach. In other words, psycho-theological learning is expected to serve as a bridge between students' cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings and their emotional appreciation of spiritual values that shape their mental resilience. This is the primary focus of this research: identifying students' mental resilience conditions, analysing the psychological and theological factors that influence them, and designing and testing the effectiveness of a psycho-theological learning model within the framework of transformative Islamic education.

At the global level, various literature emphasises that character education based on spirituality and theological values is one of the effective strategies in shaping a resilient and competitive generation. Globalisation brings technological innovations and risks of identity crises and adolescents' loss of meaning in life. In this context, Islamic education needs to adapt by developing integrative learning models that emphasize cognitive aspects and instill contextual and applicable religious meaning (Nasucha et al., 2023). Psychotheological learning models have the potential to make a significant contribution in addressing this need. The limited empirical research examining the effectiveness of the psychotheological learning model in improving mental resilience

indicates a gap in research that needs to be explored further. This study tests the model and offers a transformative learning approach based on modern religious psychology theory and classical Islamic theological concepts. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and Islamic education practitioners in designing more comprehensive and relevant learning programmes for today's Muslim youth (Moslimany et al., 2024). However, to date, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in madrasahs still tends to be cognitive and has not fully touched on the affective and spiritual dimensions of students in depth. This results in weak mental resilience among Muslim students in facing academic pressure and the turmoil of adolescence. The educational problem is the lack of a structured learning model integrating Islamic theological values and religious psychology approaches in formal education.

Previous studies have highlighted the urgency of developing a spiritual-psychological approach in Islamic education. *First,* research by (Shodiq, 2025; Sirait & Olis, 2024) emphasises the importance of integrating spiritual and emotional dimensions into the learning process to foster authentic religious meaning. *Second*, (Aggarwal et al., 2023; Estrada et al., 2019) found that religiosity developed within an educational context is a protective factor against adolescent psychological disturbances. *Third*, a study by (Faidah et al., 2024; Sugiharto et al., 2023) demonstrated that students' self-control significantly improved through a learning approach based on the values of tauhid. *Fourth,* (Armstrong et al., 2019; Hogan, 2020) introduced a transformative learning model based on spiritual values and positive psychology that can enhance student participation and mental resilience. *Fifth,* (Irpan & Sain, 2024; Maidugu & Isah, 2024) revealed that character education based on Islamic theological values has long-term impacts on the formation of resilient and optimistic character.

Theoretically, this research draws on Viktor Frankl's theory of religious psychology regarding logotherapy, which suggests that spiritual meaning is a crucial foundation for individual psychological resilience. This theory is reinforced by the principles of tawhid and qadha-qadar in Islamic theology, which epistemologically explain that all life events are part of divine will and wisdom. When internalised, they form a strong and unwavering personality. The context of psychotheology-based learning directly combines the theory of religious coping mechanisms in psychology with Islamic principles from primary sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical theological thought, such as that of Imam Al-Ghazali.

Based on the above description, research on psychotheological learning models is urgently needed in Islamic education. This model is expected to serve as an effective pedagogical alternative in measurably enhancing Muslim adolescents' mental resilience. Through an interdisciplinary approach, it is hoped that the results of this research can provide practical contributions to Islamic Religious Education teachers and Islamic educational institutions in nurturing a generation that is psychologically resilient and theologically sound (Baderiah et al., 2025). Based on the above description, the purpose of this study is to analyse the implementation of the psychotheological learning model in efforts to strengthen the mental resilience of Muslim students in the madrasah environment and to identify the roles of teachers, the learning environment, and spiritual activities in promoting students' psychological resilience.

Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to developing an integrative learning concept based on the values of religious psychology and Islamic theology in modern Islamic education. This study can also enrich Islamic education studies with a multidisciplinary approach integrating psychology, theology, and pedagogy. Meanwhile, pragmatically, the results of this study can serve as a practical reference for Islamic education teachers, madrasah principals, and education policymakers in designing learning models that are not only focused on cognitive aspects but also build students' mental strength, religious optimism, and spiritual resilience in facing the challenges of the times.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological study design to explore implementing the psycho-theological learning model for enhancing mental resilience among Muslim adolescents at Madrasah Aliyah STIT Muaraenim, South Sumatra, Indonesia (Hadi et al., 2021). The phenomenological approach was chosen to capture participants' subjective experiences, emotional perceptions, and spiritual reflections in the learning process, especially within Islamic educational settings. The data in this study consisted of narrative descriptions of students' and teachers' lived experiences, their engagement with spirituality-based learning activities, and observable indicators of mental resilience shaped through psycho-theological practices. The primary data sources included Islamic Education teachers, the head of the madrasah, and eleventh-grade students who had been actively participating in the psycho-theological learning environment.

The research utilized four integrated techniques to ensure data richness and validity: interviews, classroom observations, exploratory questionnaires, and documentation analysis. Observations were conducted over one month, from January 15 to February 15, 2025, in the madrasah classrooms, focusing on student behaviors, teacher-student interactions, and the manifestation of emotional and spiritual responses during the teaching-learning process. In-depth interviews were held with five Islamic Education teachers, the principal of the madrasah, and ten selected students who had experienced the psycho-theological learning process for at least one semester. These interviews explored changes in students' mindsets, emotional coping mechanisms, and spiritual reflections resulting from the learning experience. Documentation included lesson plans (RPP), teacher reflection notes, student portfolios, affective assessment forms, and logs of students' spiritual activities such as prayer journals and participation in religious rituals. These documents substantiated observational and interview data and provided insight into the structural implementation of the psycho-theological model.

Data analysis followed the standard phenomenological procedure involving data reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and verification. During the reduction phase, the researcher selected and refined key information relevant to the research questions, focusing on themes such as spiritual transformation, resilience-building moments, and the affective outcomes of psycho-theological learning. Data was displayed through descriptive thematic narratives, illustrating how students internalized theological concepts and developed psychological endurance through learning. In the analytical stage, the researcher critically examined the data using Viktor Frankl's theory of logotherapy, (Hornik, 2024), which emphasizes spiritual meaning as a foundation for psychological resilience, and theological constructs from Islamic tradition, such as *tawhid* and *qadha-qadar*. This theoretical lens provided a comprehensive framework for interpreting the integration between spiritual beliefs and emotional development.

Furthermore, the analysis was strengthened through a comparative discussion with recent scholarly works, such as those by (Hasanah & Zuhdi, 2020), (Wahyuni & Rosyidi, 2023), and (Khairunnisa & Ramli, 2021), allowing for a synthesis of previous findings with the current field data. Findings were verified through member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation across data sources, methods, and theoretical perspectives to ensure credibility and authenticity. This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of the psycho-theological learning model in fostering mental resilience among Muslim adolescents in the Islamic educational setting

context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Before presenting the research findings, it is essential to emphasize that this study seeks to interpret the lived experiences and inner reflections of Muslim adolescents engaged in psycho-theological learning. The phenomenological approach in this research allowed the researcher to capture observable behaviors and the internal processes of meaning-making, emotional responses, and spiritual transformation throughout the learning journey.

The data presented in this section result from a rigorous and continuous engagement in the field through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation analysis, and triangulated reflections. These findings are not merely descriptive accounts of learning activities, but somewhat thematic interpretations that reveal the underlying psychological and theological dynamics that contribute to mental resilience in Islamic educational settings.

The data analysis process followed a structured path beginning with data reduction, thematic categorization, and comparative synthesis guided by relevant theoretical perspectives from religious psychology and Islamic theology. Through this framework, the study provides insights into how psycho-theological principles, when systematically implemented, can foster personal strength, religious optimism, and emotional stability among students.

The findings are presented narratively, interwoven with excerpts from participants' expressions and observations of classroom practices, aiming to provide a holistic picture of the psycho-theological learning model in action. The discussion also integrates existing literature to strengthen the interpretive claims and highlight the study's contribution to the broader discourse in Islamic education and adolescent mental health.

With this foundation, the following section elaborates on the core findings derived from the field, beginning with the conceptual structure of the psycho-theological learning model as applied in the madrasah context.

Table 1. Psycho-Theological Learning Model to Improve Mental Resilience
in Muslim Adolescents

Learning Model	Implementation of Psycho-Theological Learning	Enhancement of Mental Resilience
Integrative Islamic Psychology-	Teachers integrate concepts of	Students develop a spiritual

Learning Model	Implementation of Psycho-Theological Learning	Enhancement of Mental Resilience
Theology	tawhid, qadha-qadar, and Islamic values into reflective learning, spiritual dialogue, and habitual worship. practices	understanding of life's trials, reduce academic anxiety, and respond to failure with patience and acceptance.
Guided Theological Reflection	Learning sessions conclude with reflective activities such as spiritual journaling and discussions on relevant Qur'anic verses.	Improves self-awareness and emotional regulation; students manage anger, fear, and social stress more constructively.
Spiritual Mentorship by Teachers	Teachers act as spiritual facilitators who connect lesson content with students' inner experiences and religious beliefs.	Students feel emotionally safe, experience a supportive teacher-student relationship, and develop a sense of self-worth.
Structured Religious Practices	Implementation of congregational prayers, group remembrance (dzikr), and regular spiritual activities integrated into PAI lessons.	Builds spiritual discipline, fosters positive habits, and strengthens a stable religious identity as the foundation of psychological resilience.
Contextual Learning Through Prophetic Stories	Teachers utilize stories of the Prophets and Islamic figures to contextualize struggles and life challenges.	Inspires students morally, enhances religious optimism, and provides spiritual role models for personal resilience.

The research results indicate that the psycho-theological learning model implemented at Madrasah Aliyah STIT Muaraenim has significantly enhanced students' mental resilience. This model integrates psychological dimensions with Islamic theological values in an integrated manner, thereby transforming learning into a space for knowledge transfer and the development of spiritual and emotional character.

One of the most prominent concrete implementation forms is guided spiritual reflection activities. Teachers facilitate religious discussions in these sessions and guide students to connect lesson materials with their personal experiences. Many students reported feeling more at peace and able to understand life events more positively after participating in this process. This reflection serves as a meeting point between cognitive and affective aspects in the learning process.

Additionally, the presence of teachers as spiritual guides is a crucial element in this model. Teachers are no longer positioned solely as material conveyors but also as figures who can provide an emotionally safe space for students. Some students feel more valued and understood because teachers open informal spiritual dialogue spaces outside of class hours. This creates a more human and emotionally profound learning atmosphere.

Scheduled religious activities, such as collective Dhuha prayers, morning dzikr, and reciting prayers before lessons, indirectly establish a stable spiritual routine. This routine provides a rhythm of calmness in students' daily lives. Through field observations, it is evident that students who consistently participate in these activities tend to be more emotionally stable and less prone to panic when facing exams or social conflicts within the school environment.

Furthermore, using inspirational stories about the Prophets and Islamic figures as thematic media in learning has a strong motivational effect. Students feel they have role models and real examples of facing challenges with faith and patience. This serves as a stimulus for forming religious optimism, which becomes the foundation of their psychological resilience.

Overall, implementing psycho-theological learning strengthens students' cognitive religious aspects and creates a transformative space that touches the deepest dimensions of their existence as Muslim teenagers. The mental resilience formed is not instantaneous but is built through spiritual habit formation, psychological guidance, and the contextual internalisation of monotheistic values. These findings indicate that Islamic education that addresses the spiritual aspects of students can serve as a strong bulwark in facing the complexities of modern life.

The Characteristics of Psycho-Theological Learning Models in the Context of Islamic Education

The psycho-theological learning model applied at Madrasah Aliyah STIT Muaraenim is a learning approach that combines the reinforcement of religious values with an in-depth exploration of students' psychological aspects. This model was developed to address the needs of Islamic education, which is not only conceptual-cognitive but also encompasses the affective and spiritual dimensions that have been largely overlooked in the learning process.

In practice, this model does not merely teach religious material as memorisation or textual understanding but also encourages students to experience, reflect on, and internalise the values of faith in their daily lives. Teachers act not merely as instructors but also as spiritual guides and emotional companions for students. Learning takes place in an environment that is more reflective, communicative, and that touches the deepest aspects of students' personalities.

Implementation of Psycho-Theological Strategies in Learning Activities

Psycho-theological learning in madrasahs is carried out in a structured manner and integrated into teaching and learning activities. Each lesson typically begins with a prayer, collective recitation of Islamic invocations, or spiritual motivation. The teacher then presents material directly related to students' life experiences, such as issues of failure, life challenges, social conflicts, or

academic pressure, which are then connected to the values of monotheism, patience, gratitude, and trust in God.

Reflection is an integral part of this model. At the end of the session, students are encouraged to write about their spiritual experiences in a personal journal or share life experiences that have taught them faith lessons. This activity ensures that learning does not stop at conceptual understanding but continues through internalising meaning within the students' hearts.

Outside of class hours, teachers also guide students in scheduled religious activities such as Dhuha prayer, spiritual development, and open discussions about the challenges they face in life. Teachers demonstrate empathy, offer advice, and create a space for two-way dialogue, fostering a deep emotional connection between students and teachers. This atmosphere greatly supports the creation of psychological comfort in the learning process.

Improving the Mental Resilience of Muslim Students

The application of the psycho-theological learning model has shown a significant impact on students' mental resilience. Through contextually internalising religious values, students become more emotionally stable and can manage life's pressures more calmly and wisely. They begin to view life's challenges not as threats, but as part of the process of character formation and divine decree that must be endured with patience and sincerity.

Students who were previously prone to anxiety when facing exams or social conflicts now demonstrate resilience and calmness. They can step back, regulate their emotions, and address issues more reflectively. Many admit to finding meaning in their religious routines and turning to religious activities as a place to return to when they feel tired or stressed.

The spiritual habits formed within the madrasah environment provide a strong foundation for students to cultivate self-confidence, optimism, and hope. The mental resilience that develops is not solely the result of pedagogical intervention, but rather a shift in perspective toward life, rooted in spiritual beliefs and values. This model has proven effective in addressing the needs of Muslim adolescents navigating the phase of self-discovery while also facing significant social and academic pressures.

Discussion

Theological and Psychological Integration in Psycho-Theological Learning: A Theoretical Perspective

The psycho-theological learning model derives its theoretical foundation from classical Islamic theology and modern psychological thought. From the theological standpoint, core concepts such as *tawhid*, *qadha-qadar*, and *hikmah* (divine wisdom) provide existential meaning to life events. Imam Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, emphasized that proper spiritual education must cultivate not only knowledge (*ilm*) but also inner transformation (*tazkiyatun nafs*) through reflection on divine purpose (Hera et al., 2024; MMustofa, 2024). Similarly, Frankl's logotherapy asserts that the search for meaning is the central motivational force in human life, and that suffering, when interpreted meaningfully, can strengthen psychological resilience (Bull, 2025; Toussaint, 2025). These converging perspectives support the idea that psycho-theological learning is not merely a pedagogical strategy but a transformative process grounded in epistemological certainty and existential reflection. Integrating reflective Qur'anic dialogue, structured spiritual routines, and emotional mentorship positions education as a medium for internalising *iman* (faith) as an emotional and cognitive stabilizer.

Comparative Findings from Related Research

The empirical results of this study align with and extend the conclusions of several recent works. Emotionally rich spiritual education enhances students' self-awareness and reduces behavioral reactivity (Andrei, 2023; Andres, 2025). Their findings reinforce this study's observation that guided theological reflection sessions (e.g., Qur'anic journaling and spiritual storytelling) foster emotional composure among adolescents. This study affirms that religiosity—through internalizing *tawhid* and understanding *qadha-qadar*—serves as a protective buffer against anxiety and strengthens adolescents' coping mechanisms (Sharma et al., 2019). The work, which demonstrated improved self-control through tauhid-based education, also resonates with the documented behavioral changes among students at STIT Muaraenim, particularly their improved ability to manage stress during examinations and interpersonal conflicts. A transformative educational model based on positive psychology and spiritual values that strengthens student participation(Alamsyah & Ningsih, 2025; Harahap, 2023). Psycho-theological learning boosts intrinsic motivation by infusing religious meaning into education, proving the value of integrating spirituality and psychology in learning.

Critical Perspective and Author's Proposition

Despite these affirmations, the current study offers several critical insights. First, many previous studies stop asserting correlation without structurally modeling how theological concepts are operationalised in the classroom. This study, in contrast, articulates a pedagogical mechanism involving spiritual journaling, role modeling, and religious routine as a bridge between abstract theology and lived emotional experience (Postman, 2021; Sunaiah, 2025). *Second,* while prior works predominantly frame religiosity as static or doctrinal, this research argues for a dynamic and experiential religiosity, developed contextually through dialogical learning. This suggests a necessary shift from *indoctrinative religious teaching* toward *constructive faith internalisation*, in which students actively reconstruct meaning in light of divine principles (Hasyim et al., 2025; Mala et al., 2024). *Third,* the author posits that the teacher's spiritual presence as facilitator and companion is not ancillary but central to the process (Lewis, 2020; Matshaka et al., 2024). This perspective challenges the assumptions of secular psychological models, which frequently exclude or minimize the role of faith in the teacher-student relationship; in contrast, within Islamic educational settings, teachers do not merely transmit knowledge but embody theology in praxis, functioning simultaneously as spiritual guides and educators, and in doing so, they establish a unique form of emotional safety that integrates both pedagogical structure and pastoral care, thereby fostering a more holistic and faith-affirming learning environment.

However, a potential limitation arises: not all Islamic educators are prepared to assume this dual role without appropriate training. The model, while effective, demands a high level of spiritual maturity, theological competence, and emotional intelligence from teachers (Ikhwan et al., 2025; Izzah, 2025). To address this gap effectively, it is essential to implement targeted professional development programs designed explicitly for Islamic educators, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate psycho-theological learning approaches across various educational contexts; furthermore, the author emphasizes that such models should not be limited to remedial interventions or restricted solely to religious schools w(González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022; Walter, 2024), but rather be recognized as valuable and holistic strategies that can enhance the psychological and spiritual well-being of students in diverse educational environments. It has universal relevance in an era marked by adolescent existential anxiety, digital overstimulation, and loss of meaning. Therefore, this model can contribute to a broader discourse on *spiritually responsive education* within and beyond Islamic schooling contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the psycho-theological learning model implemented at Madrasah Aliyah STIT Muaraenim significantly enhances the mental resilience of Muslim adolescents. By integrating theological values with psychological approaches within learning activities, students can reshape their understanding of life's meaning, effectively manage stress, and cultivate key attitudes such as patience, self-confidence, and optimism. Teachers serve as spiritual facilitators, vital in guiding students' emotional and spiritual development, while structured religious activities reinforce their emotional well-being. This model has proven to be an effective educational strategy—not only in shaping Islamic cognitive development but also in holistically strengthening the psychological resilience of adolescents. The findings suggest incorporating psycho-theological learning frameworks more widely within Islamic educational institutions. Training programs should be designed to equip educators with both psychological insight and theological literacy, enabling them to support students' mental and spiritual growth. Future applications of this model can extend beyond religious schools, offering a valuable alternative to secular psychological approaches in contexts where faith and education intersect.

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